

FCC Localism Response

News

WTHR's commitment to the local market is best illustrated by the number of hours devoted to local news on a daily basis. Every weekday we air 5.5 hours devoted to local news. On Saturday and Sunday we air 4.5 hours a day. The overwhelming majority of each of these newscasts is focused on local issues and stories. Our commitment to the local market is also reflected in the fact we have devoted more employees and more staff to the coverage of local news than any other television in the state.

As a matter of practice, WTHR regularly makes the coverage of local politics a high priority. Eyewitness news is the only local station with a newsgathering bureau in Washington, D.C.. Our bureau is used to report on the voting practices of Indiana Representatives and Senators. During political windows WTHR provides an open table discussion of the issues during its Sunday Morning newscasts. Approximately 20 minutes each week during the political window is provided to candidates at every significant level of public office for the discussion of significant issues. WTHR has also been aggressive in the pursuit of bringing candidates before the public in the form of political debates in prime-time. During the Primary season, WTHR aired a local election special from 7-8M at considerable expense. On November 2nd, we produced sustaining election night coverage from 7PM until 11:35PM.

One of the most significant local issues is always the coverage of local weather. WTHR has invested over \$800,000 in one of the most powerful radar systems at the local market level. Additionally, we have provided on-going, breaking weather coverage whenever there is a local weather emergency. In May of this year, WTHR pre-empted network programming from approximately 2PM until 9PM as tornados swept through Central Indiana.

In the interest of bring Central Indiana viewers subjects of local interests, WTHR pre-empts NBC approximately 20 hours of prime-time per year. This past year Eyewitness News presented the prime time documentary, "To Hell and Back," a story of high local interest. We also present a local "Crimestopper" report which helps local law enforcement agencies identify and locate criminals. Eyewitness News has also featured thousands of local children without parents in our newscasts. "Thursday's Child" is a weekly feature that showcases local children in need of adoptive parents.

WTHR has spent millions of dollars in technology that improves the quality of local news coverage. A network of over 15 traffic cameras have been wired throughout the city and are frequently featured in newscasts and are constantly available on wthr.com.

In January of every year, Eyewitness News hosts a "People's Agenda" town hall meeting in the Indiana State Capital. Citizens are invited to share their concern about local issues with WTHR and Indiana state legislators. These issues are recorded and used as a guide to shape our news coverage throughout the year.

Community Affairs

WTHR has made community service one of hallmarks of our local identity. Every year we set aside millions of dollars worth of airtime for some of the most visible community projects in our community. Community Calendar is a daily :30 showcase of community events that airs 7 times a day within commercial time throughout the broadcast day. These "Community Calendar" segments give not-for-profit organizations visibility they could never afford.

"Shattering the Silence" is an annual project designed to educate people on issues pertaining to domestic violence. This year particular emphasis was placed on teen-on-teen dating violence. A heavy schedule of announcements aired throughout the broadcast day from June through September. A one-hour Prime Time special aired on WTHR in August. Many news stories aired during the period on Eyewitness News. As a result of this campaign the local domestic abuse hotline reported an 88% increase in calls seeking help for domestic abuse. This project was honored with a local Emmy and a national Gracie Allen award.

Vote Indiana" is a get out the vote initiative that aired on WTHR from January through the end of October. Over \$100,000 in PSA's encouraging people to register and vote aired during commercial time. Eyewitness News also reported on the subject extensively, educating people on how and where to register.

WTHR also presents the United Christmas Service Project; an effort to collect money for underprivileged families near the holidays. Last year over \$800,000 was raised, in part, through an aggressive public schedule and many on-air news stories.

For the past 17 years WTHR has spearheaded "Coats for Kids"; Through regular announcements and news stories we have collected and distributed over 160,000 coats for low income children.

Every weekday Eyewitness News presents "Focus," a five minute live interview featuring a different Not for Profit agency in the community. Interviews usually showcase a relevant public event that benefits a not for profit.

Every February we produce a series of local Black History profiles that run in newscasts throughout the month. These profiles showcase local African-Americans who have made significant contributions to our community. Additionally, :30 cut-down versions air in commercial time throughout the broadcast day.

WTHR has also played a significant role in supporting the Susan G. Komen Race for The Cure. In addition to airing an aggressive schedule of on-air announcements, Eyewitness News presents a number of stories within newscasts. On the day of the race a significant portion of the newscast that day is devoted to local stories showcasing breast cancer survivors.

WTHR annually sponsors 2 local blood drives in January. On two different weekends we air live :60 appeals from the local blood bank encouraging people to donate blood. For two weeks prior to the collection we air :30 announcements in commercial time reminding viewers of how blood is needed in the community. We collect the blood over a 3 day period resulting in approximately 3,300 pints collected for the Indiana Blood Center.

WTHR is an annual sponsor of the Indiana Black Expo Job Fair which is held every year in July. WTHR pays for professionals with expertise in the area of resume writing to assist individuals seeking career help. For approximately 3 weeks we run an aggressive on-air campaign encouraging people seeking help in this area to attend the job fair. Last year over 2000 people were given resume advice. During the job fair, station managers are staffed at a booth to answer questions about job openings at WTHR and to provide additional guidance to people seeking broadcast careers.

SKYTRAK WEATHER NETWORK

Since January 1, 2000, WTHR has distributed The SkyTrak Weather Network. Available over-the-air, as well as distributed on most local cable systems, The SkyTrak Weather Network is a 24/7 local weather service designed to provide viewers with constant local weather coverage. In addition to the forecast, live radar, travel forecasts, traffic information and local news headlines are a regular part of the service. To fully service our entire coverage area, we have invested in 9 remote weather stations that report local weather statistics back to our broadcast center. Wind speed/direction, temperature, humidity and barometric pressure are all collected and reported as a basic feature of SkyTrak Weather Network.

Programming

Since 1962 WTHR has produced and aired "The Brain Game." It is the longest running, locally produced show in Indianapolis. Much like "Jeopardy," "The Brain Game" is a weekly quiz show comprised of teams from local High Schools. Each week a team is eliminated from the competition. At the end of the school year a winner emerges from the 9 month competition. Cash prizes are given to the top three teams. The mission of the program is to educate viewers and to honor the pursuit of academic excellence.

The first Saturday in June WTHR pre-empts network programming from Noon until 11PM to present the Children's Miracle Network Telethon. We contribute the airtime and production services and distribute the telecast to a state-wide network of stations. The telethon raises over \$7 million each year for the local children's hospital.

In January we produce and air the United Negro College Fund Telethon. We preempt 4 hours of programming on a Saturday evening to raise funds for minority scholarships. Again, we provide the production services and the airtime.

In an effort to provide our viewers with strong coverage of local business stories we contracted a local business producer to provide us with a one-hour, local business program to air on Sunday mornings at 11:00AM. "Inside Indiana Business" is a newsmagazine which showcases local business people and stories of interest. We also air a daily news segment in our Monday-Friday Eyewitness News @ Sunrise.

Miscellaneous

Annually, WTHR employees contribute over \$80,000 to the United Way. This figure far exceeds the amount any other local broadcaster contributes locally. Individually, 32 employees contributed over \$1,000 apiece. On top of the \$80,000, Dispatch Broadcast groups contribute matching funds to the local organization on a 50% basis.

Last year WTHR purchased sponsorships totaling \$88,000 which benefited 55 local charitable organizations.